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New volunteer service focuses on care and compassion

A Buddhist nun will be available to support patients nearing the end of life and their loved ones as part of a new palliative care volunteer program starting at Fairfield Hospital on 10 August.

The hospital is seeking volunteers to join the new program, particularly representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, to provide patients with culturally appropriate support.

Volunteers will receive free specialised training over a six-week period to prepare for their roles.

Palliative care volunteer coordinator Ms Arlene Roache, South Western Sydney Local Health District, encouraged members of the community to consider volunteering with the program.

“Because of the cultural diversity of the Fairfield community, we are welcoming people from various cultural backgrounds to be a part of our volunteer service,” Ms Roache said.

“We are introducing the service to the hospital after staff and community members identified a need for volunteers to provide additional support for palliative care patients.

“This is in addition to the volunteer program already supporting patients in their homes in the community.”

Volunteer Thi Nga La is looking forward to supporting patients and their families in the hospital setting.

“The extra culturally appropriate support at this time is very important for patients and their loved ones and it is a privilege for me to assist them,” Ms Nga La said.

The NSW Government invested \$330,000 in 2018-19 in the Palliative Care Volunteer Support Services Program, run by Palliative Care NSW, which provides support, advice, education and governance to the volunteer manager networks across NSW.

The NSW Government is investing \$27.1 million in 2018-19 to boost palliative care support. This follows the record additional \$100 million investment over four years for palliative care services, which commenced in 2017-18, on top of the estimated \$210 million spent each year on palliative care across NSW.

For more information on the Fairfield Hospital palliative care volunteer program contact Arlene Roache on 8738 9755.